



# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

September 27, 2013

Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell  
Commissioner

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Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: *Notice of Ex Parte Presentation*  
Modernizing the E-Rate Program for Schools and Libraries, WC Docket No. 13-184

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On Tuesday, September 24, 2013, Brittany Kincaid of the Arkansas Department of Education, Adrienne Gardner of the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority, and Hank Kilgore of Senator Mark Pryor's office, met with Lisa Hone, James Bachtell, and Regina Brown of the Wireline Competition Bureau, and James Balaguer of the Office of Legislative Affairs, to discuss the critical need for E-Rate reform.<sup>1</sup>

During the meetings, Ms. Gardner and Ms. Kincaid told FCC staff about work currently being done in Arkansas to build a network with increased bandwidth for all K-12 schools in the state. Currently, many schools are unable to take full advantage of digital learning opportunities due to a lack of bandwidth. The two shared anecdotes from Arkansas, such as:

- Reports that some teachers must schedule time to check their email because there is not enough bandwidth for them to be online at the same time.
- Reports that some school secretaries cannot come to work in the morning, when they would be most useful, because the bandwidth available during the school day goes to classrooms. Office work (such as sending required attendance reports to the Department of Information Services) must wait until the end of the school day.
- Reports that districts with the least amount of bandwidth had no plans to purchase more because they'd been discouraged by previous failed attempts to secure bandwidth from a local provider.
- Reports that bandwidth costs have fallen drastically for some districts as the state's Quality Digital Learning Study group and FASTER (Fast Access For Students, Teachers and Economic Results) committees began researching the costs of bandwidth.

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Ms. Gardner and Ms. Kincaid stressed the urgency of E-Rate reform, particularly in rural states like Arkansas. The state is presently seeking bids for Ethernet transport and Internet service for multiple state locations and needs as much flexibility as possible to configure its new network. Arkansas does have some state money available to expand its network infrastructure but the E-rate program will play a critical role in ensuring students have access to quality digital learning opportunities over the long-term.

Ms. Gardner and Ms. Kincaid provided the FCC with preliminary data from all but six Arkansas school districts showing average cost and capacity for districts. No proprietary vendor data was included. A final version, which includes data from all schools districts, will be sent to the FCC at a later time.

Finally, Ms. Gardner and Ms. Kincaid encouraged the FCC to incentivize consortium purchasing to reduce costs, improve strategic use of limited funds, and increase program efficiency.

Pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Commission's rules, a copy of this letter is being filed via ECFS. Please contact the undersigned if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

/s/ Brittany Kincaid

Brittany Kincaid, Arkansas Department of Education

cc: Lisa Hone  
James Bachtell  
Regina Brown  
James Balaguer  
Adrienne Gardner  
Hank Kilgore